May 19, 2012

Rory Schmitt

 Editor
Current Issues in Education

Dear Ms. Schmitt,

First, let me take this opportunity to thank you and the peer reviewers for the time and effort put forth in assessing our manuscript # 954-3564-1-SM. The critiques provided were very detailed and highly constructive to our efforts.

In this letter, I have copied each reviewer’s comments and have provided information which addresses the issue and the revision that was made.

Reviewer I

*Length
Reviewer #1 commented that the sections " Pathway to Change" and
"Organizational Plan" may be effectively condensed to better summarize the
key ideas that the reader must know to understand the conditions. Less
step-by-step descriptions may actually be more effective in portraying the
program development at State U to the reader*.

**The two sections have been condensed into one section and the authors have provided a synopsis of the change rather than a step-by-step description.**

Reviewer 2

*The Reviewer suggests that you should provide more information (e.g.,
statistics data on school demographics and ESL and SWD’s academic
performance) to support and validate the argument: It’s urgent to prepare
teacher candidates to work with CLD and Special Ed. students.*

**In an effort to provide more information, the authors have provided Figures 1 and 2. Figure 1 highlights the demographic data of the School of Education candidates. Figure 2 describes the demographic data for students served in various school programs for the State of Texas. These figures highlight the urgent need to prepare candidates to work with CLD and Special Education students.**

*Reviewer #2 also asks the following questions that may be included in this article:*

 *What are the State ESL certificate/endorsement requirements? Were they used to help determine the needed courses?*

**This has been addressed on page 6 in the Context section of the paper. Additionally, page 10 and 11 have been amended to include the procedures used to determine needed courses. The course outline also has been added.**

*How many teacher candidates are in the program?*

**This information has been included in Figure 1.**

*Does this change only apply to undergraduate students/teacher candidates?*

**This information is included on page 9. The change is for any teacher candidate seeking Early Childhood-Grade 6 certification.**

*The Reviewer also feels that the Pandora analogy is unclear when applying to the teacher education reform. What is"Pandora’s box" in terms of teacher education? What’s inside the box?*

**Page 3 now includes more detail on what is found in Pandora’s box in terms of teacher education.**

*On pg.6, the Reviewer feels that you mentioned a student survey, but it’s unclear who student participants were. Are all current teacher candidates in the program? Also, you mentioned, “In this revision of the new EC-6 program, an additional course in Special Education was added…” the Reviewer asked: How is it different from the survey course mentioned in the last paragraph on pg. 5? It was written “an additional course in Special Education was added, addressing instructional strategies for diverse learners.” But, diverse learners can be special ed. students as well as learners with different SES, home languages, religion backgrounds, etc. The Reviewer suggested that a timeline table of the whole reform process would be helpful.*

**This section of the paper was revised to answer the question posed by the reviewer. The section entitled Pathway to Change contains the changes as requested. A timeline table was not added, but the reform process has been addressed in the section of the paper entitled Pathway to Change.**

*The Reviewer asked: How is it possible to combine assessment content in three different areas into one course? What criteria/standards did the committee use to make this change? One assessment course (3 credit hours?) addressing reading, special education, and general education? It’ll be helpful if you provide an outline of topics.*

 **We have added an outline of topics for courses on page 11 and have included a section that details how the assessment course will be team taught in order to address all issues of assessment in reading, special education and general education ( see pg. 13 Lessons Learned)**

*On pg. 10 – About the statement: “Input thus far, however, suggests that this combined program is one that is highly desired by the constituents of State U.” The Reviewer asked: where did the input come from? Faculty? Teacher candidates?*

**This statement has been clarified on page 11. The input came from teacher candidates and community stakeholders.**

*On pg. 12 -- “Transitioning from the old program to the new program has not been without difficulties. The year after the change, some students are enrolled in the old program while students just starting are going into the new program. This provided a challenge in scheduling because some courses
have moved from one phase to another.” Reviewer #2 wants to know: how did the program handle and overcome the difficulties?*

**Page 13 now includes a section detailing how the Phase Team meetings were instituted to handle the issues that developed during this change process.**

*On pg. 13 clarifications is needed: “…implementing a program change to include General Education, ESL and Special Education…” Here “General Education” means EC-6 core courses, right? Not university-level general education courses.*

**Yes, that is correct. We have added clarification on page 16 of the manuscript.**

Reviewer 3

*The Reviewer suggests that the literature review include a more thorough description of the challenges and needs of today’s teachers. The literature review (or first section of the paper needs to be (succinctly) expanded.*

**The literature review was expanded to discuss the challenges faced by students in the 21st century and how teachers can address these issues. This was added on page 5.**

*In the Context section of the paper, the Reviewer suggests that it would help if more details could be provided in regards to the teacher-candidates. What are the socio-demographic characteristics of the current teacher-candidate students? What is the current course pathway and what are the changes to the courses taken that is being proposed/implemented. Reviewer #3 suggests a table would help to more clearly convey this information*.

 **Figure 1 and 2 have been added to clarify the demographic data for the teacher candidates. The section of the paper entitled Pathway to Change and Implementing the Change succinctly discuss the change to the courses taken and the proposed/implemented changes.**

*About the paper’s statement that the first phase of implementation was in Fall 2011 and the second phase will begin in Spring 2012, the Reviewer suggests that a section of this paper should clearly discuss the process – all the aspects (meetings, discussions, the different stakeholders) – of just trying to bring change to a particular teacher preparation program. This should be a section by itself. The Reviewer then suggests that the paper should then have a different section that explains the changes and then a section that evaluates the new program. Reviewer #3 feels that the section of the paper, Lessons Learned, is a very important one for all teacher preparation programs. The Reviewer points out that this section would be extremely helpful to teacher preparation programs across the nation.*

 **After careful review and discussions, the authors feel that we have succinctly discussed the change process and how those changes were implemented and the lessons we have learned. The authors decided not to include a section evaluating the new program. We agree this would be very valuable, but at the time of this revision, the SOE has not yet met to evaluate. We feel this would be very appropriate for another article in the future.**

Additionally, all spelling and grammatical errors pointed out by the reviewers have been corrected. We look forward to hearing from you in due time regarding our resubmission and to respond to any questions and comments you may have.